

# Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route

*National Historic Trail*



*Strategic Plan Draft*

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This report is intended to provide the public with information about the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail planning process. This report is a draft document, and should be considered a first step in a longer detailed planning process. The document was prepared by Joe DiBello and Samantha Driscoll of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail office of the National Park Service. However, the information provided does not represent the NPS as a government agency, as this is an evolving document in a live planning process.

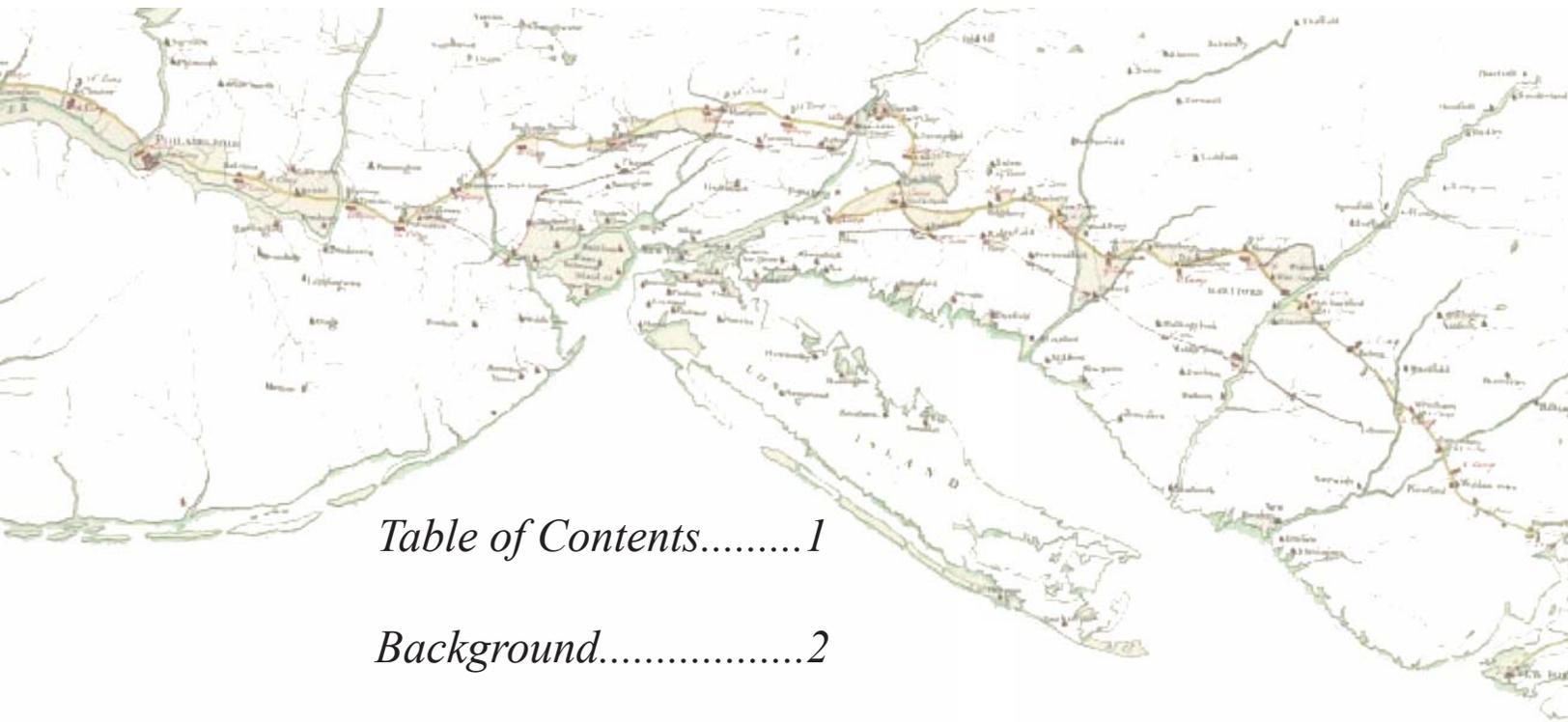
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# *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT*

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# *Washington-Rochambeau*

## *Revolutionary Route NHT*

### Background

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route was designated a National Historic Trail by Congress (PL 111-11) and signed by the President in March 2009. This was a combination of many years of study and efforts of the national organization known as Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association (W3R-US) and its many partners in the United States and abroad.

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail commemorates the over 680 miles of land and water trails followed by the troops under General George Washington and the French general, the comte de Rochambeau in 1781-1783. This march led to the American-French victory over British forces under Lord Cornwallis at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia; a turning point in the War for Independence.

The National Park Service (NPS) collaborated with W3R-US on a series of strategic planning sessions. The three regional sessions included one for Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut; New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and one for Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia. The information, opinions, and concerns collected from each session were summarized to serve as a basis for the future development, interpretation, commemoration and preservation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT, as reflected in this report.

This report is a draft strategic plan, and continues to be an evolving document as part of a live planning process. The strategic plan is based off research and information gathered thus far. The NPS encourages input from the public during the planning process, and will work with any interested organization. The strategic plan is a first step in the process of creating a Comprehensive Management plan for the NHT. This report considers ideas and is intended to start a conversation about the future of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT.

The NPS will assist in the protection of historic resources and commemoration and interpretation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail in partnership with a broad range of federal, state, local and private organizations. The NPS, with partners like the W3R-US, will create an effective educational forum through planning for identifying, preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the historic march of American and French allied forces in the years of 1781-1783.



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### **Mission**

The mission of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail is to identify, preserve, interpret, and celebrate the American and French Alliance in the War for Independence. The mission can be separated into three main areas: Improve visibility of the trail and its significance, convey the meaning of the route to the public by improved education and interpretation, and identify management partnerships and processes to facilitate the success of the Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail.

#### ***Improve Visibility***

- Preserve the evidence of the trail
- Create public awareness of significance of this historic event
- Create public awareness of programs that promote or assist with the effort
- Identify partnerships
- Establish consistent markers, logos and resources to mark and commemorate the trail

#### ***Improve Education and Interpretation***

- Teach youth/citizens about French contribution and its relevance to the US
- Recognize spectrum of audiences, Revolutionary War history buffs, children, tourists, and residents
- Emphasize cultural groups, French and international contribution
- Create consistent associated programs, while adapting to the wide spectrum of audience



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## *Identify Partnerships*

- Develop regular programming and events through partnerships
- Identify NPS expectation and responsibility with W3R, state, and local organizations
- Recognize importance of locals and volunteers in the success of the trail
- Identify and create a sustainable financial strategy



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### Vision Statement

*The Vision statement is our idea of what things will “look like” in ten years as a result of our efforts:*

People are aware of the history and are honoring, recognizing, and appreciating our past along the route. They are aware of opportunities to see and experience the journey along the trail which is commemorated with markers, waysides and monuments. The NHT partners provide educational content accessible to all and there are programs in every school. The NHT, which can be experienced by car, train, and bike or on foot, connects communities, events, facilities and related stories and trails along the way. It provides a variety of opportunities for recreation for residents and tourists alike. The partners are inspired and are inspiring others to take part in the effort and the NHT is a symbol of community pride.



# *Washington-Rochambeau*

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### Themes

#### **The American and French Alliance in the War for Independence**

The overarching theme of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail is the American and French Alliance in the War of Independence.

Within this theme three major subcategories can be identified: how the alliance was integral to the birth of a nation, the cross-cultural significance of the alliance, and the military success of the combined forces.

##### ***Birth of a Nation***

- Hardships of campaign, both for troops and the civilians who supported them
- Yorktown as huge victory, visible expression of the hope for independence and the gratitude that greeted the returning French Army on its march north in summer 1782
- Watershed in the development of an American identity, huge step in becoming a nation

##### ***Cross-cultural significance***

- Example of international help throughout war, global character of War of Independence
- French help an early acknowledgement of America as a sovereign nation by world power
- American-French Alliance since 1775, comes to peak in this campaign



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- Community impact and stories of human interaction between soldiers and civilians
- Illustration of the American War for Independence as a truly diverse effort: not just international assistance but also the settlement patterns of the US, many nationalities contributed and/or fought the war

### *Military Success of the Campaign*

- Victory at Yorktown a ‘dramatic turnaround’ in War
- French contribution in military strategy
- Logistical success, a feat in itself
- Geography’s effect on military strategy, also how march impacted landscape and waterways
- Ties together stories of the Northern and Southern campaigns
- Example of international military cooperation
- March to Yorktown was longest march of Revolutionary War
- Importance of Battle of the Capes Naval Engagement, De Grasse victory over Hood instrumental in Yorktown victory
- 3 phases of trail: RI to West Chester NY, West Chester to VA, and return from VA



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## Objectives

### *Comprehensive Website to serve as the information center for NHT*

- NPS website will be created that includes downloadable maps with layers of information of trail sections, comprehensive history of the route, clear directions for driving with links to mapping sites, biking and hiking maps where available, lists of sites and trails connected to the NHT in a downloadable database with links to respective websites, as well as links to related websites, suggestions for further reading, links to tourist websites for each city included to assist in locating hotels, restaurants, local activities, events, etc.

### *Social Media outreach*

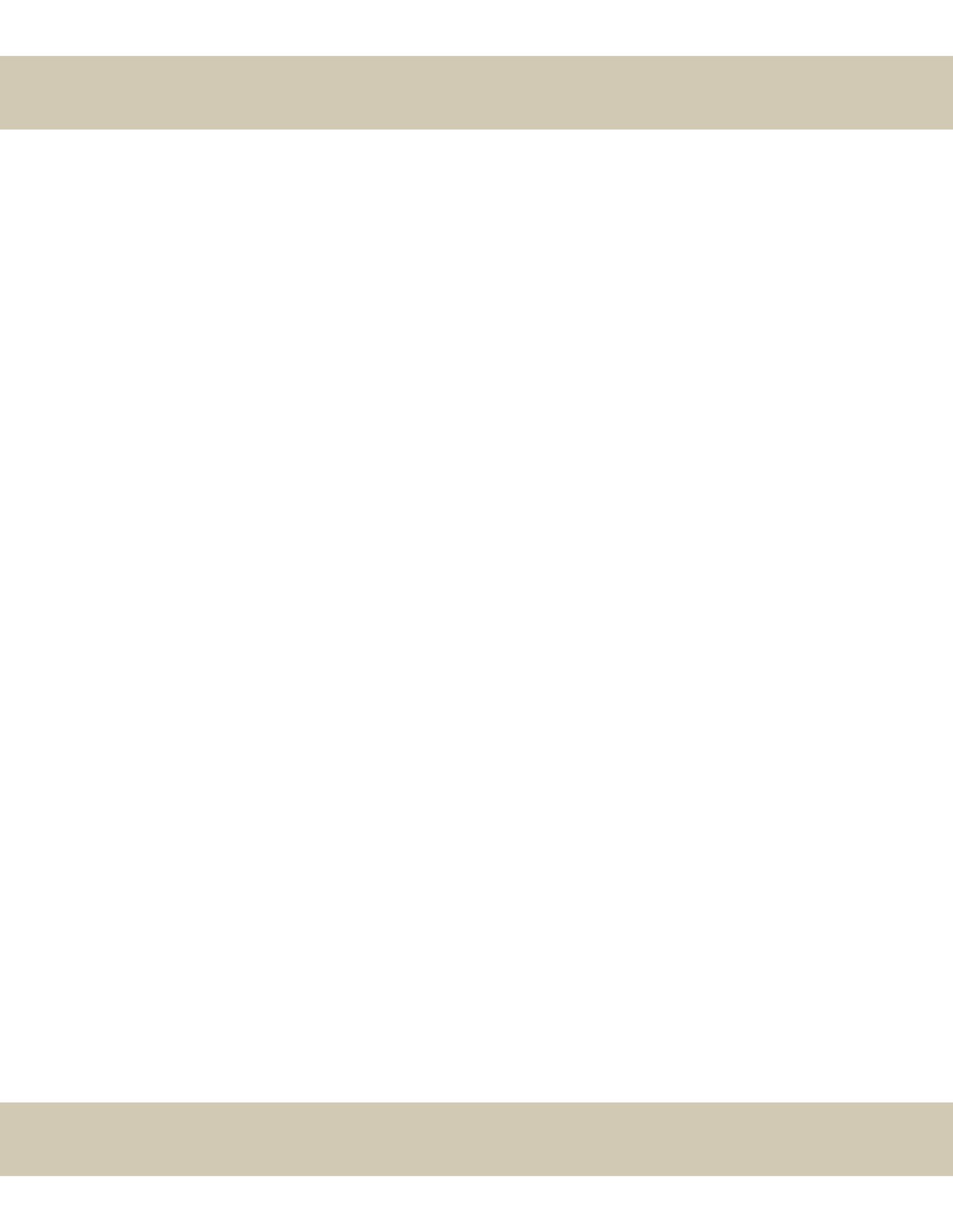
- Create accounts with social media forums like Facebook and Twitter to provide regular updates on information, events, and general communication.

### *Cell Phone Tours*

- Create a practical and easy way of relaying information to the public, through their cell phone. Recordings of historical facts will be available where notifications occur along the entire trail.

### *Documentary Film*

- An easily distributed media that can be used to educate the American public about historical significance of the Yorktown campaign and history of the Washington-Rochambeau NHT.



# *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT*

## *GIS Mapping of entire NHT*

- Maps of each state will include layers for main route and secondary routes of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail. Layers will also be included to show parks, heritages sites, or historic landmarks near the NHT. An additional layer of current road maps will be needed. Each state will follow a template, so that the maps can be joined later to create a detailed map of the NHT in entirety.

## *Comprehensive Official Signage for the NHT*

- Design, create and develop comprehensive official signage for the entire Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT. This will include logos, templates for official signs, template and design of official mile markers, design of banners, and any secondary signs relating to the NHT.

## *Brochures*

- NPS has developed a national brochure. We envision each state will develop their own brochure to discuss the particular chapter of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT that occurred in that state, and include a detailed map to be used for navigation with the main routes, secondary routes, current road map, and locations of any related historic resource.



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## *Develop and Support Print Materials about the NHT*

- Print materials will include a guidebook for entire NHT, as well as a more in depth guidebook for each state. Pursue newspaper and magazine spreads and encourage a press release for all local and community events relating to NHT.

## *Create Visitor Experience*

- Design and create displays for visitor locations along the NHT, especially at Post Offices and other municipal buildings. Collaborate with other trails, parks, or museums along the NHT to create joint exhibits. Support sculpture and public art along the NHT. Also, update, transport, and store interpretative displays.

## *Conservation and Preservation*

- Conserve, preserve and maintain all historic sites, significant landscapes and structures, interpretive material and existing artifacts.

## *Continue Research of the history, location, impact and area of the NHT*

- Conduct historical research relating to the route in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Identify all National and local register designated properties falling within the NHT area. Identify all archival and research centers which have materials related to the NHT. Locate all intersections with other historic trails or scenic trails, any overlap into parks, landmarks or heritages areas, and a survey of battlefields.



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## *Integrate the NHT and Yorktown Campaign into children's education*

- Encourage public school districts along the NHT to incorporate the Yorktown Campaign and the NHT into teachings on the Revolutionary War. Create a low budget film that is appropriate to be shown to students in a scholastic environment. Coordinate interested schools with local historians that can become resources.

## *Support community, local and national events relating to the NHT*

- Support community and local events which fall along the route of the NHT. Support all reenactments, especially the march to Yorktown following the route of the NHT. Encourage first person interpretation, living history and guides at every event. Create a calendar of events, while also announcing events via the main website and social media to increase participation.



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### Appendix

The attached documents are the summaries of the three Strategic Planning Sessions held by the National Park Service to collect the information, opinions, and concerns of members of the W3R-US and all concerned parties. The information collected from these sessions contributed to mission, themes, and objectives discussed in this report.

*Strategic Planning Session, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania:*

**February 12, 2010**

*Strategic Planning Session, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island:*

**March 12, 2010**

*Strategic Planning Session, Washington DC, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia:*

**March 26, 2010**

